



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Shepard Building
255 Westminster Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-3400

NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Elliot Krieger, Communications – (401) 222-8471
Embargo until: Friday, February 10, 2012 @ 1 p.m.

2011 NECAP: Middle-school scores up, high-school mathematics down Five-year graduation rate rises to 80 percent

Results of the Fall 2011 New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) assessments released today (February 10) show scores rising slightly, with the biggest improvements in middle schools.

The five-year graduation rate is up slightly as well, but achievement gaps across the state persist and Rhode Island has met or nearly met only 7 of the 31 ambitious goals set for NECAP performance and graduation rates.

“I am pleased that Rhode Island students continue to improve on state assessments, even though the rate of improvement is not as great as we would like to see,” said Governor Lincoln D. Chafee. “Rhode Island has recently received national recognition for our policies on teaching and learning, and it is important that we maintain our investments in public education, as I’ve called for in my 2013 budget.”

“I want to commend our teachers and students, particularly in our middle schools, for the improvements on the NECAP exams,” said George D. Caruolo, Chairman of the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education. “I am, however, concerned about the continued low achievement level in high-school mathematics, where we need to see significant improvement so that all students are ready to graduate and to succeed in college and careers.”

“While the 2011 NECAP results and graduation rates show only modest gains across the state, we do see some pockets of excellence, such as a dramatic improvement in the four-year graduation rate at Central Falls High School,” said Deborah A. Gist, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education. “Because of our many current initiatives - including mentoring for all new teachers, transition to the internationally benchmarked Common Core standards, and implementation of educator evaluations – I am confident that our schools will continue to improve and our students will attain even higher levels of achievement.”

The NECAP results that Commissioner Gist released today show that 56 percent of Rhode Island students scored at proficient or better in mathematics (up 1 percentage point from 2010) and 73 percent scored proficient or better in reading (up 2 points).

-more-

Telephone 401-222-4600 **Fax** 401-222-6178 **TTY** 800-745-5555 **Voice** 800-745-6575

The Board of Regents does not discriminate on the basis of age, color, sex,
sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, race, religion, national origin, or disability

The biggest improvements were in middle schools, where 60 percent of students were proficient in mathematics (up 3 points) and 74 percent were proficient in reading (up 4 points). Elementary-school scores were virtually unchanged from 2010 (62 percent proficient in mathematics, 70 percent proficient in reading); high-school scores were virtually unchanged in reading (77 percent proficient) but dropped by 3 percentage points in mathematics, to only 30 percent proficient.

In writing, 55 percent of tested students scored proficient or better.

The statewide 5-year graduation rate was 80 percent, up 1 point from 2010. The 4-year graduation rate was unchanged, at 77 percent.

Statewide, achievement gaps for English learners, for students with disabilities, and for Hispanic students widened; achievement gaps for students in poverty and (in reading) for black students narrowed.

Of the 31 ambitious goals Rhode Island has set regarding NECAP performance and graduation rates, the state met 4 of the goals, nearly met 3 others, and missed the remaining 25 goals.

Rhode Island scores have improved in all assessments at all school levels since the first year of NECAP assessments (2005 for grades 3-8, 2007 for grade 11). Elementary-school scores (percent proficient) have improved by 10 points in mathematics, 10 points in reading; middle-school scores have improved by 12 points in mathematics, 17 points in reading; high-school scores have improved by 8 points in mathematics, 15 points in reading.

The Commissioner also recognized several communities for significant achievements:

- Blackstone Valley Prep Elementary School, which improved its percent proficient in mathematics by 25 points;
- Central Falls Senior High School, which raised its 4-year graduation rate from 54 percent to 71 percent;
- The Learning Community Charter School, which improved its percent proficient in mathematics by 15 points; and
- The North Smithfield School District, which improved its percent proficient in writing by more than 20 points at each school level.

The NECAP assessments were administered jointly in October 2011 to students in grades 3-8 in mathematics and reading (and in grades 5 and 8 in writing) in Rhode Island, Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. At the high-school level (grade 11), Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and Vermont (but not Maine) students were tested in mathematics, reading, and writing. NECAP is the only multistate testing program in the country.

At the high-school level, Rhode Island reading scores matched New Hampshire and surpassed the scores in Vermont by 4 points. In writing at the high-school level, Rhode Island was the top-scoring NECAP state, with 51 percent proficient.

Rhode Island is the lowest-scoring NECAP state in mathematics, however.

A full report on the October 2011 assessment results and the 2011 graduation rates is posted on the RIDE website, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/Assessment/Results.aspx>

NECAP statewide, district, and school reports are posted at:

www.infoworks.ride.ri.gov

and

<http://reporting.measuredprogress.org/NECAPpublicRI/>